

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 01201 151529Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1201

EXDIS

NEA FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON ONLY FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, AG, SS
SUBJECT: CLIFFORD AND BOUMEDIENE ON SAHARA

REF: ALGIERS 1195

1. DURING CLARK CLIFFORD'S 12 MAY DISCUSSION WITH BOUMEDIENE (REFTEL), CLIFFORD ALSO RAISED WESTERN SAHARA ISSUE. AS MR. CLIFFORD'S COMMENTS WERE SOMEWHAT OUT IN FRONT OF CURRENT US SAHARA POLICY AS I UNDERSTAND IT, I AM TRANSMITTING CLIFFORD'S REPORT ON HIS DISCUSSION DIRECTLY TO YOU FOR DISTRIBUTION AS YOU SEE FIT. I COMMENTED TO CLIFFORD THAT HIS REMARKS APPEARED AHEAD OF US POLICY; HE RESPONDED THAT HE REALIZED IT AND THAT HE HAD STRESSED TO PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE THAT HE WAS EXPRESSING ONLY HIS PERSONAL VIEWS.

2. IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH BOUMEDIENE CLIFFORD NOTED THAT EVERY TIME CONFLICT AROSE BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA, KISSINGER HAD CHOSEN MOROCCAN SIDE. CLIFFORD STATED THAT HE BELIEVED MISTAKES HAD BEEN MADE IN LAST ADMINISTRATION AND THAT HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE ON ISSUE. HE SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA HAD JUST MOVED IN TO SAHARA AND TAKEN
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OVER BY FORCE OF ARMS. HE ADDED THAT THE US VOTES AT UN WERE PARTICULARLY DISTURBING TO HIM. HE NOTED THAT US HAD ALWAYS DEFENDED DECENCY AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS, AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE WORLD WARS, AND WE HAD ALWAYS BEEN BEACON FOR IDEA THAT PEOPLE BEING RULED COULD ONLY BE RULED BY THEIR CONSENT. IN WESTERN SAHARA PEOPLE HAD NEVER BEEN GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS

THEMSELVES, AND HE BELIEVED IT WAS DANGEROUS EXAMPLE AS IT PROVIDED TEMPTATION FOR OTHER COUNTRIES IN WORLD TO MOVE IN ON THEIR NEIGHBORS. IN HIS VIEW, CLIFFORD STATED, US POSITION LEFT GREAT DEAL TO BE DESIRED; PAST ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT CARRIED OUT BASIC US POLICIES. CLIFFORD EXPLAINED HIS HOPE THAT THIS WOULD CHANGE, AND NOTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD STRESSED THAT ALL US POLICY WAS UNDER REVIEW, THAT HE WOULD TAKE LOOK AT ALL POLICIES, AND THAT PAST ONES "WERE NOT BINDING ON POLICIES OF FUTURE."

3. CLIFFORD COMMENTED THAT BOUMEDIENE WAS "EXCEEDINGLY INTERESTED". BOUMEDIENE NOTED THAT CLIFFORD HAD BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT AND COMMENTED, "IF YOU HAD NOT BROUGHT IT UP I WOULD NOT HAVE DONE SO. I HAVE LISTENED WITH A MIXTURE OF HOPE AND COMFORT TO WHAT YOU HAVE SAID. I HOPE THE US WILL RECOGNIZE THE DANGER. YOU HAVE STATED IT WELL; I HOPE YOU WILL EXPRESS IT TO OTHERS". BOUMEDIENE CONTINUED ON TO EXPRESS "SOME DISAPPOINTMENT" IN US POSITIONS, COMMENTING THAT HE BELIEVED THERE HAD BEEN SOME "SACRIFICE OF PRINCIPLE" IN ORDER TO KEEP FRIENDS IN CONTEXT OF BROADER POLICY. LYNE

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